

# Dreamworld

by: Sharon Butala

I take my dreams very seriously; I believe I should live my life based on them, and I'm trying to, although practical matters keep intervening, not all of which are of my own making. If I am a writer of both non fiction and fiction, I am now, because of my dreams, fully aware of what I am doing, which is having to choose between my soul, which craves to pursue novel writing, and my ego, which enjoys all too easily the recognition for my other writing. When I'm writing fiction, I feel myself dissolve into another world where things are both of and not of my own making, where I can be absolutely still and wholly observant, I feel myself to be in touch with something I call the creative flow. I feel that, in moments of purity and wonder, I meld, for a precious instant, with that flow. Then, in those few, yearned-for moments, novel-writing becomes a holy act. How could I wish to turn away from such joy?

On the other hand, it's very satisfying to be in demand, and it's wonderful to feel success, even if it isn't for the thing at which I most want to be a success. Believing, as I do, that for each of us there is a way- the one right way- and struggling to find the one that is my own, I am confused, I wonder if I am wrong in thinking that novels are what I should be writing. I wonder, too, if in turning to non-fiction I am being subverted by my greedy ego from working at the building of my own soul. My dreams and the work I have put into sorting them out have made clear to me what otherwise I might not have understood until it was too late, if indeed I ever did.

Dreams also work in other mysterious ways. Recently I had a visitor who was a stranger to me. I remarked that I'd had a beautiful dream the night before in which I was in an end room of a dormitory, with glass on three sides, which jutted out over the ocean. Enormous, brightly coloured yellow, orange, green and cream birds came flying toward my room and gamboled and played with each other, swooping through the air. "They reminded me of whales, actually," I said. Smaller birds, "about the size of dolphins," I exclaimed, a creamy beige in colour, came closest of all as they played, even dipping into the water and splashing me, since by that time my dream glass had disappeared. My visitor said, "That sounds like my house." She explained that she lived in an ocean side house on the Pacific. From her deck, whales and dolphins could regularly be seen, and seabirds and even eagles often lit on it.

On another occasion I dreamed about a certain strange man, a dream character, I thought; the next morning I met him in person for the first time. He turned out to be a special guest at a meeting I attended, and I knew him, the minute I saw him, as the man. I am still trying to understand why a dream had signaled a meeting with each of these people.

Whether you choose to believe dreams come from indigestion or from God, or from the gods or goddess or your wiser self, or some other mysterious source, the fact is, aboriginal people the world over are right: dreams do teach, dreams are a source of information about the world, a guide if you let them be, and a constant source of information. I sometimes go so far as to think, with aboriginal people, that the dreamworld is simply another reality, another world I enter some nights when I fall asleep. There are times when I ever prefer it to the waking world.